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the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 15 Fourteenth Year April 18, 1947

DENMARK

Ecumenical Refugee Conference in Copenhagen

The Ecumenical Refugee Commission of the World Council of Churches held its annual meeting in Copenhagen, March 26 to 30, 1947. Rev. Henry Carter of London, Chairman of the Commission, presided and there was an excellent attendance including 31 members who represented 12 countries and 5 general religious organisations that are concerned with refugee problems in Europe. These organisations are the World Council of Churches, the World's Alliances of Y.M.C.A.s and Y.W.C.A., the International Hebrew Christian Alliance and the American Christian Committee for Refugees. The Commission was fortunate in having present Dr. J. Hutchison Cockburn of Geneva, Director of the Department of Reconstruction and Interchurch Aid of the World Council and Dr. Robbins W. Barstow of New York, Director of Church World Service.

The matter of greatest local concern in Denmark under consideration by the Commission was that dealing with the German refugees who to the number of some 155,000 yet remain in this country. After noting with approval the outstanding service which the Danish Government has rendered at sacrificial cost to these "enemy intruders", the Commission strongly urged the Allied Governments to relieve Denmark of this heavy burden, taking these men, women and children from their present confinement with the social and moral dangers thereby involved. Such liberation is highly desired both by the Danish Government and by the refugees themselves who greatly prefer the opportunity to return to their own lands, or to be received in some section of the world where they may start life afresh.

The Commission gave detailed consideration to the proposed International Refugee Organisation to which it is contemplated that many of the responsibilities of UNRRA for refugees and displaced persons will be transferred. Deep concern was expressed as to the severe financial limitation imposed upon the proposed IRO by the stringency of its first annual budget. In the judgement of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission this will make it impossible for IRO adequately to meet the needs even of that portion of the refugee groups who are its defined responsibility. The Commission also emphatically states

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"it is beyond the power of voluntary agencies even with the maximum effort to meet the consequent requirements."

The Commission noted also with deep concern that IRO by its constitution excludes from its care and assistance the considerable proportion of persons who are of German ethnic origin. These in the main seem doomed to be included in categories which imply a social discrimination that is wholly inconsistent with the teaching and wishes of the Christian Churches. "Some form of United Nations machinery should be charged with responsibility for the well-being and settlement of these people", emphatically declares this united voice of churchmen.

It was fully recognised by the Commission that hundreds of thousands of these refugees must wait a long time for rehabilitation or settlement. During this waiting period every precaution needs to be taken by governments concerned and every opportunity utilised by the Churches to provide adequate care and all possible consideration. Retraining and rehabilitation courses are urged, and it is also imperative that dependable information shall be supplied both regarding attitudes and plans of governments and concerning the lands that may open up to receive them. Minimum equipment and clothing appropriate to the new place and type of activity are also obligatory.

It was also unanimously agreed by the Commission that the major portion of these distressed persons will have to make their permanent homes in the lands in which they now find themselves. The overcrowded conditions of Germany and Austria in which most of them are now makes it imperative that these two countries as well as other countries that may be involved shall be enabled to become self-supporting. Unless this is done, even to the extent of a readjustment of frontiers where that may be necessary, world peace will be endangered by the massing of Germans and German speaking refugees in such congested quarters with consequent under-nourishment and impoverishment.

The Commission received many courtesies in Copenhagen. The closing service was held in Christianborg Castle Church under the direction of Bishop H. Fuglsang Damgaard. There was a reception given on the opening day by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Gustaf Rasmussen, and a later reception was given by the Danish Committee for Reconstruction and Interchurch Aid presided over by the veteran Dr Alfred Th. Jörgensen, national director. And most gracious of all was an audience granted the officers of the Committee by His Majesty, the King. The deliberative sessions of the Commission were held in the Danish Parliament Building, Christiansborg Slot, where every convenience was provided. Following the adjournment members of the Commission were conducted in a visitation of some of the camps in Denmark which are caring for the German refugees. E.P.S. Geneva

Rev. Newell's Arrival

Rev. Herbert W. Newell, former secretary of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand has arrived in Geneva where he has been appointed as Assistant General Secretary to Dr. Visser 't Hooft in the World Council of Churches. E.P.S. Geneva

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GREAT BRITAIN

Indian Christian Deputation

A deputation from the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon is at present visiting Britain under the auspices of the Conference of British Missionary Societies (see E.P.S.No. 6). The members include Dr. R.B. Manikam, secretary of the Council, and his wife, who is president of the Christian Home Committee of the Council, as well as a member of the National Y.W.C.A. Council, and Mr. Ranjit M. Chet Singh, head of the Friends International Service of Dehli and general secretary of the All India Adult Education Association.

According to "The Guardian" (London, April 11, 1947), Mr. Manikam said that the deputation's mission was a three-fold one: "to carry a message from the Church in India; to exercise a mission of reconciliation between Christians in both countries; and to confer with missionary societies in Britain on the problems of work in India in view of pending political changes." All were hopeful about the effect of these changes, although they were alive to the problems that would arise out of the British Government's decision to withdraw from India next year.

Dr Manikam said that one great gain to the Church would be that the non-Christian India would have a better chance to judge the Gospel of Christ on its merits. Hitherto Christianity had been regarded as the religion of the ruling Power, and the loyalty of Indian Christians to their country has often been suspect. The vital issue of religious freedom, too, was helping to unite all the Christian forces in India - Roman Catholic as well as non-Roman - and could be used as an opportunity for quickened life and interest.

Mr. Chet Singh said that "if our Christian people have sufficient faith, sufficient strength to stand up for the truth they know, I think they will have to be fully accepted by the Government, in spite of the persistent prejudices of some politicians". It was stated that the Christian Church had maintained a pioneering position in social and educational matters. "What India needs is Christian values and Christian character. The success of any administration must depend on that, and the more we Christians can give in that way the stronger will be the position of the Christian Church", said Mr. Chet Singh.

In India they were coming to see the Christian task as a world task, and they hoped - without presuption - that they would be able to give a hand in presenting to the whole Church the Christian task in perspective. "We want people to come and live with us as equals; people who will not be conscious of the fact all the time that they are British and we are Indian. What we want to be is Christian, and if an Indian Christian can best understand certains problems he will have the final say; but if we find that a person from another country can help us in the conduct of things there is no reason why he should not have full scope in shaping policy." E.P.S. Geneva

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ARGENTINA

Religious Instruction in Schools

After several days and one night of intense debate, the Chamber of Deputies agreed on March 14, 1947, with a majority of 86 votes against 41, to adopt a new law concerning religious instruction in the primary and secondary schools in the Argentine.

Article 1. of this new law states that "in all state schools, primary, post-primary, secondary and special instruction in the Roman Catholic religion will be given as a part of the normal school curriculum."

The ruling continues: "Pupils, whose parents expressly object on the grounds that they belong to another religion, will be exempted from this instruction. In this way freedom of belief is respected. Such pupils will receive moral instruction."

This new law, although it is not supposed to annul law No.14200, is, however, in direct contradiction to Article 8, which states that "Religious instruction can only be given in state schools before or after normal school hours by the ministers of the different religions to which the children respectively belong."

The Confederation of Evangelical Churches of the River Plate will continue to fight for the constitutional principles which assure complete equality - also in the religious sphere - to all inhabitants of Argentina. The Confederation will present a petition to the Senate with a view to obtaining the revocation of this new law.

E.P.S. Geneva

The World's Sunday School Association and Reconstruction

The World's Sunday School Association is taking a large share in the work of Christian Reconstruction in Europe and elsewhere. Their aim has been to help in the reconstruction of the work of Christian education through the Sunday School and other Christian agencies concerned with youth.

They have also been helping in a measure by giving personal relief to Sunday School leaders and others who have been in distress consequent upon the war. They have sent to various countries hundreds of pieces of literature, theological and devotional, also books dealing with Sunday School work. Thousands of Bibles pictures have been despatched to different countries in Europe, the Far East, and also to some parts of Africa. Paper has been purchased for the printing of magazines for Sunday School teachers and scholars. Special help has been given for the reconstruction and extension of the work in India, China and some parts of Africa.

Plans are under way at present for helping to bring one or two young ministers or leaders of Christian youth work to Britain in the Autumn of 1947 for a specialised course of training in Christian education.

Dr James Kelly, the General Secretary of the Association, has visited a number of Continental countries in the interest of the work and hopes to make further visits to Europe this Spring.

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UNITED STATES Russian Orthodox Make Clear Their Attitude

According to a telegram from Moscow Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad and Novgorod will soon leave Moscow for the United States in order to discuss plans for reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox Church in America with the Church in Russia. The Metropolitan Council of the American Church received a cable from Patriarch Alexei in January 1947, saying he had agreed in principle to its demands for complete administrative autonomy (see E.P.S. No. 7). However, a number of questions must be decided before a reunion agreement can be announced. Among these are the degree of autonomy the American Church will enjoy.

In view of the expected visit of Metropolitan Gregory in the United States, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, Professor of philosophy in the Roman Catholic University of Washington, in an open meeting charged the Russian prelate to be "a professor of atheism at the Soviet Atheistic College" and "to attempt to win over the Russian Orthodox Church in the United States for Stalin".

Against this charge Metropolitan Benjamin, Patriarchal Exarch in America, sent a protest in the form of an open letter to the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. Amleto Cicognani in Washington, with the request to "transmit it to His Holiness Pope Pius XII".

At the same time the letter was sent to "The Living Church", weekly record of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church in the U.S.A., and it appeared in its issue No. 11, 1947. We quote the following:

"Metropolitan Gregory (who is professor of theology in a theological Academy devoted to the training of priests in Christian morals and the principles of faith set forth by Our Lord Himself) is not coming to the United States 'in an attempt to win over the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. for Stalin'. He is not an emissary of the U.S.S.R. at all, but the personal representative of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia...

"Why should we be classified by Msgr. Sheen as under suspicion for our filial love to our Patriarch and Mother Church, when American Catholics of the Roman obedience stand in the same relationship to their Pope and their Mother Church? Is Christ divided, so that loyalty to Him under one name is disloyalty under another?... And is there any necessity for Msgr. Sheen to mix Mr. Stalin into the purely ecclesiastical problem of our Church discipline, Church order, and Church obedience? The Russian Orthodox in this country are loyal to the United States of America; they do not look beyond its borders for any temporal authority. Surely, it is not a Machiavellian plot for the Patriarch of Moscow to send an Archbishop to this country, as his representative in religious and ecclesiastical matters. The Russian Orthodox Church is many centuries older than the Soviet State, and it speaks with the voice of its Divine Lord and not of any human ruler..."

In an editorial in the same issue "The Living Church" writes:

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In an editorial in the same issue "The Living Church" writes:

"The protest points out clearly that the kind of dual allegiance of the Orthodox - with their spiritual head in Moscow or Greece or

Constantinople, but their political allegiance wholly in this country - is exactly parallel to the dual allegiance of Roman Catholics, who are so vociferous in their claim that their spiritual loyalty to the Pope does not make them any less loyal citizens of the U.S.A.

"It declares unequivocally that the Russian Orthodox in this country do not look beyond the borders of the U.S.A. for any temporal authority. This ought to help materially to unite the Russian Orthodox parishes in this country, which are now divided on this very issue...

"In publishing this protest, 'The Living Church' wants to reaffirm the stand of the Episcopal Church, for friendliness towards both groups of Russian Orthodox - Archbishop Theophilus, Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church of North America, and Archbishop Benjamin, Patriarchal Exarch in America and head of the Patriarchal group of the Russian Orthodox in this country - and to express the hope that it will serve to bring them into closer mutual understanding, so that the breach between them may be healed, and the Russians in this country reunited into one strong Orthodox Church..."

E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA — First Foreign Missionary

One of the first decisions taken by the newly united Church of South India (see E.P.S.No. 5) has been to form a Missionary Society and for the first time in the history of the Christian Church in India an Indian missionary will leave his country in order to bring the message of the Gospel to an other land. Rev. George Wilson, Moderator of the United Church of Northern India, comments on that appointment in "The United Church Review":

"A great congregation crowded to do honour to the Rev. Satya Joseph and his wife, and to join with the Assembly in the 'commissioning' of them as the first foreign missionaries of the South India United Church... It was a moving service. The great moment was when, first, Mrs. Joseph, and then her husband told us of their call and spoke of their purpose in going out to Papua... It was the crowning act of the Assembly. I assured Mr. and Mrs. Joseph that when my people of the United Church of Northern Indea heard of their going forth, they would join with their brethren in the South India Church in upholding them in their prayers. So, reader, pray for them. And pray for us also. These events are pregnant with meaning for us. Shall we too not go forward? Shall we too not send forth our messengers? South India has given us a glorious lead. Let us rise and follow them."

E.P.S. Geneva

KOREA — Christian Literature Society

With the former constitution as a guide, a temporary organisation of the Christian Literature Society was formed. A brief resume of its history, during and since the war, follows: On May 22, 1942, both the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Christian Literature Society of Korea were declared to be "enemy alien property" and a Japanese, former policeman, put in charge. At the same time

the sale of Christian literature, particularly Bibles and Hymnals, was forbidden. For this reason, after liberation, left-over books became "best sellers" and within nine months, 74,796 copies and 28,133 sheet tracts were sold. Receipts from the sale of this literature and from the rent of rooms in the building have enabled the custodian to pay expenses without creating a deficit. But scarcity of paper, etc. make it almost impossible for the Society to attempt its regular work of producing and printing Christian literature. However, it is hoped that a start may be made in a small way.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES — Federal Council on Aid to Greece and Turkey

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America adopted on March 25, 1947 as an interim statement a resolution calling on the Federal Government to clear the proposed aid to Greece and Turkey with the United Nations.

Further action by the committee, according to the resolution, may be expected following "a more complete analysis by the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace of the implications of the proposed legislation."

The resolution includes the following passages: "The proposal of President Truman to Congress asking for the extension of aid to Greece and Turkey for economic and military purposes deserves our serious consideration as Christians and citizens. At this time we do not have adequate information on the total situation in the Near East and our entire relationship with Russia that called forth the President's proposal... There are considerations, however, which we believe it desirable to bring to the attention of our constituency at this time:

1. The President's frank statement is a contribution to our national thinking. He specified, as the major factor occasioning his proposal, the attempted subjugation of peoples by armed minorities and outside powers using coercion and infiltration. The implication is clear that the main difficulty lies in our relations with Soviet Russia. It is therefore also clear that the endeavour to reach an understanding with Russia must be a major emphasis. If Soviet foreign policy is aggressive and expansionist in character, we have the obligation not only to discourage expansionist action but also to seek a comprehensive settlement of all our conflicting interests with Russia and therefore to offer to Russia the prospect of a peaceful development of her legitimate interests that will appeal to less expansionist elements in her Government.

2. We recognise that the United Nations and its specialised agencies recently brought into being for the purpose of preventing war and aiding economic and cultural development among the peoples, are not yet equipped to deal with all the immediate problems that threaten the integrity and welfare of the various states. We believe, however, that in such issues as those presented in the President's proposal we should give the United Nations full information. If any part of the programme proposed can be undertaken now by the United Nations that should be done. Thus, the organisation of the world for peace will be strengthened."

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Leaders in Church Laymen's Work Meet in Bossey

Leaders in church laymen's work met at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey near Geneva from April 10 to 14, 1947. Twenty-five representatives from a variety of European Church organisations and institutes in nine European countries came together at this work conference.

In these organisations are combined those church activities, using modern methods, which create a direct contact with men of various vocations. To this end the organisations in the various countries have arranged conferences, study courses, evening classes, and similar affairs, all serving the purpose of bringing about a living contact and conversation with the lay world. Many of these programs have tried with success to break through the wall which isolates the Church from actual living.

The best known among these are the "Sigtuna Stiftelsen" in Sweden, the Protestant Professional Association in France, the Church and World Institute in Holland, and the Evangelical Academy of Bad Boll in Germany.

The wish was expressed that ties with similar organisations in other parts of the world might be established. The Conference had previously concluded in a working committee that with the possibilities offered by Bossey and with the cooperation of other phases of the World Council of Churches - for example, the Study Department of the World Council - this modern lay work might be extended on an international basis. For the carrying on of this work a small committee was appointed under the leadership of Mlle Suzanne de Dietrich of Bossey and Pastor Jacques de Senarclens of Geneva.

E.P.S. Geneva

YUGOSLAVIA

Campaign of Evangelism

Bishop Agoston Sandor of the Reformed Church in Yugoslavia reports on an evangelistic campaign launched all over the country. It began with great enthusiasm during the Shrovetide in the 40 communities in Yugoslavia where there are Reformed Churches. In each community the campaign lasted for a week. There were meetings twice a day, morning and evening, during the whole week. Every day one minister conducted a service but the plan of texts was uniform. The text of the morning service was taken from the Bible Reading issued by the Church and used in every family. The subject of the evening sermons was the Community of Saints. Bishop Agoston has taken part in the campaign in practically each parish. E.P.S. Geneva

JAPAN

Kagawa Withdraws From House of Councillors

Dr Toyohiko Kagawa has withdrawn his candidacy for a seat in the House of Councillors, which replaces the House of Peers when the latter body passes out of existence on May 3, 1947.

E.P.S. Geneva

Leaders in Church Laymen's Work Meet in Bossey

Leaders in church laymen's work met at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey near Geneva from April 10 to 14, 1947. Twenty-five representatives from a variety of European church organizations and institutes in nine European countries came together at this work conference.

In these organizations are combined those church activities, using modern methods, which create a direct contact with men of various vocations. In this and the organizations in the various countries have arranged conferences, study courses, evening classes, and similar efforts, all serving the purpose of bringing about a living contact and conversation with the lay world. Many of these programs have tried with success to break through the wall which isolates the church from actual living.

The best known among these are the "Stjerna Brittiljson" in Sweden, the Protestant Informations Association in France, the Church and World Institute in Holland, and the Evangelical Academy of Tutzing in Germany.

The wish was expressed that also with similar organizations in other parts of the world might be established. The Conference had previously concluded in a working committee that with the possibilities offered by Bossey and with the cooperation of other phases of the World Council of Churches - for example, the Study Department of the World Council - this bureau lay work might be extended on an international basis. For the carrying on of this work a small committee was appointed under the leadership of Mlle Suzanne de Dietrich of Bossey and Pastor Jacques de Bonneville of Geneva.

E.P.S. Geneva

YUGOSLAVIA

Dissolution of Evangelicals

Bishop Josefson Sander of the Reformed Church in Yugoslavia reports on an evangelistic campaign launched all over the country. It began with great national enthusiasm during the Christmas in the 40 communities in Yugoslavia where there are Reformed Churches. In each community the campaign lasted for a week. There were meetings twice a day, morning and evening, during the whole week. Every day one minister conducted a service but the sum of texts was uniform. The text of the morning devotion was taken from the Bible reading issued by the Church and used in every family. The subject of the evening sermons was the community of saints. Bishop Josefson has taken part in the campaign in practically each parish.

E.P.S. Geneva.

JAPAN

Church Withdrawn from Houses of Counsellors

Dr Toyohiko Kagawa has withdrawn his candidacy for a seat in the House of Counsellors, which replaces the House of Peers when the Diet body passes out of existence on May 3, 1947.

E.P.S. Geneva